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# ENG 2009-003: Literature and Human Values: Labor, Class, Power

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**English 2009G.003 ~ Literature and Human Values:  
Labor, Class, Power**

**T,Thur 12:30-1:45**

**Spring 2012**

Prof. R. Beebe  
Coleman Hall 3841  
rlbeebe@eiu.edu

Office Hours:  
Mon 9-10:30; Tues/Thurs 11-12:30  
& by appointment

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**Texts~**

- Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (1813)
- Michael Lewis, *The Big Short* (2011)
- Alan Moore & David Lloyd, *V for Vendetta* (1989)
- Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (1897)
- Other readings distributed as handouts or as e-text

**Course Description~**

According to the EIU Catalog, English 2009G (Literature and Human Values) is a "study of some of the universal, recurring issues facing the individual, as they are dealt with in a selection of literary texts from diverse cultures." In this section of the course – titled "Labor, Class, Power" – we will investigate how these concepts are related in complex, dynamic ways, and how these concepts provide the basis for some of the most challenging and provocative stories and human events. In short, we'll be investigating the extreme, and we'll do so in short stories, novels, non-fiction, and film.

More than anything, this course seeks to improve your critical reading and writing skills. We will be reading a great deal, and I want you to consider this course as an opportunity to enjoy some terrific storytelling (fiction and non-fiction) as we discuss how labor, class, and power are important concepts in the modern human drama.

But I also expect you to be prepared to discuss the material in depth and with some sophistication. To this end, I'm putting a high priority on your participation and your ability to facilitate and engage in informed conversation, which you will see reflected in the course requirements and our day-to-day activities.

**Requirements~**

Your final grade will be determined by your performance on the following items:

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| • Response Papers (informal writing) & Reading Quizzes | 15% |
| • Reading Comprehension Tests (3 @ 5%)                 | 15% |
| • Two Formal Papers (approx. 4-6 pages; @ 15%)         | 30% |
| • Final Exam   | 15% |
| • Reading Journal (due at midterm & end of semester)   | 10% |
| • Participation in class discussions                   | 15% |

**Attendance~**

Since this is a discussion-oriented course, your attendance and participation are key components in the overall success of this class. Therefore, you need to attend each class. I will

allow two absences (or personal days); however, you will lose 5% of your final grade for every unexcused absence after that. For more than five unexcused absences, you will receive an automatic F for the course. You are responsible for documenting and verifying excused absences, which you must do with me in person (not via email), within one week of the absence.

### **Formal Papers~**

For the two formal papers, I will hand out an assignment sheet with writing prompt, options, and due date. You will need to follow conventional standards for academic papers in regard to format and documentation. (More on this at a later date.) Please do not email me your papers unless you receive prior approval.

### **Informal Writing (Response Papers) & Quizzes~**

You will be writing frequent informal responses – both in class and outside of class – which I use as a way to prompt discussion as well as a way to gauge your understanding of the reading. While these writings are relatively informal in nature, I still expect them to be completed with some care. I will evaluate these with a plus, check, or minus.

You can also expect frequent reading quizzes. Since the bulk of this course is on discussing the reading material, it's important that you keep up with the reading. Quizzes will be one way I measure your progress.

### **Plagiarism~**

I enforce the English Department Statement on Plagiarism: "Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism – the appropriation or imitation of the language, idea, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's own original work – has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Office of Student Standards."

### **Classroom Etiquette~**

You're welcome to bring your notebook computer to class. However, I ask that you observe common rules of etiquette and decorum when you use it. In brief, you may use it to take notes or complete an in-class writing activity. You may not use it for anything not directly related to class work.

\*\* Please turn off (or mute) cell phones, and, out of respect for the class and the integrity of class activities, please refrain from text messaging during.

### **Electronic Writing Portfolio~**

English 2009G is a writing-intensive course, which means that you may use papers from this course for your EWP requirements. I'll be happy to assist you with this requirement. I ask only that you complete this activity at least two weeks **before** the course ending date. Contact the Center for Academic Support and Achievement if you have any questions about the EWP (581-6056) or visit their website at <http://www.eiu.edu/~assess/ewpmain.php>

### **Students with Disabilities~**

If you have a documented disability and need special assistance, please contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) for consultation.

**Reading Journal.** For *each* reading assignment, you need to select two or three passages from the reading material and write them down in a separate notebook. After each quotation, write down some ideas about why you selected it (like the language? confused by the ideas? inspired by the ideas?). Maybe you're a reader who thinks more visually and you find better expression of the quotation through a drawing or photograph or cartoon. Feel free to make this journal your own. My interest is simply that you keep the journal on a regular basis and do so consistently. How you annotate each quotation is up to you.

Please date each entry, and bring the journal to class, since I will be asking each of you on occasion to read the quotation(s) you selected.

I will collect the journals at midterm and again at the end of the semester. Journals that are complete, consistent, accurately dated, and show active engagement will receive the full 10% credit. Journals less complete or consistent will receive 5%; journals incomplete or not turned in will receive 0% credit.